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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0759  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2741  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2125  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 001402

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS: CAMPAIGNING BEGINS

REF: A. BISHKEK 1401

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 1366

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 1342

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Classified By: CDA Lee Litzenberger, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The official campaign period for Kyrgyzstan's early parliamentary elections opened November 26 with billboards, media ads, and public events. On November 25, the Central Election Commission (CEC) completed the registrations of 12 parties to appear on the ballot; 10 parties were disqualified for not meeting all registration requirements. The December 16 election will be conducted entirely by party lists, and parties must pass a threshold of 5% of registered voters nationwide, as well as 0.5% in each of the seven oblasts, in Bishkek, and in Osh. On November 19, the CEC announced that the regional threshold would be calculated based on the total number of voters nationwide, meaning that parties would need to get approximately 13,500 votes in each region, an extremely high barrier in the less populated oblasts. OSCE/ODIHR has deployed 32 long-term international observers around the country, and it is preparing for up to 250 short-term observers for the polling.

In other developments related to the elections, President Bakiyev dismissed Prime Minister Atambayev, Osh Governor Satybaldiyev, and Minister of Education Osmonaliyev (Ref A). End Summary.

The Campaign Begins

[1](#)2. (SBU) The official campaign period for Kyrgyzstan's early parliamentary elections opened on November 26, with the unveiling of billboards, numerous advertisements in the media, and a few public events. State television will provide free air time to the parties for half-hour debates during December 10-13 (with three parties participating in each debate), and there will be some additional free time for individual campaign messages. Several parties, however, have

complained that for paid advertisements, state television is reserving prime-time slots for the pro-presidential Ak Jol party, while relegating their ads to less popular hours. There have also been reports that some local officials have refused to allow pro-opposition billboards to go up.

#### A Threshold or Barrier?

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13. (SBU) The most controversial issue in the campaign revolves around the interpretation of the two thresholds that parties must cross to enter parliament. Parties must get at least 5% of the number of voters (not number of votes cast) registered nationwide, which is approximately 2.7 million. Parties also face a 0.5% threshold in each of the seven oblasts, in Bishkek, and in Osh City. On November 19, the CEC announced that the 0.5% threshold would be based on the nationwide list of voters, meaning that a party would have to get approximately 13,500 votes in each of the designated regions. This interpretation of the law creates an extremely high and disproportionate barrier, especially in the less populated regions. For example, Talas Oblast has only 120,000 registered voters, Osh City 132,000, and Naryn Oblast 143,000.

14. (C) Ten parties petitioned President Bakiyev to overturn the CEC's interpretation, but Bakiyev declined to do so, his spokesman saying he wouldn't "interfere" in the process. Ironically, Bakiyev's Ak Jol party took the matter to court, but on November 28 a Bishkek court upheld the CEC's interpretation of the electoral code. Several government officials, however, have defended 0.5% barrier and the CEC's interpretation. CEC Chair Klara Kabilova told us that the high regional threshold was necessary to strengthen national parties and prevent regionalism.

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#### Twelve Parties on the Ballot

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15. (U) On November 25, the CEC completed registration for 12 parties to participate in the election. Ten parties that applied for registration were disqualified by the CEC for various technical reasons, including some for not following election code requirements about the number of women, ethnic minorities, and youth on the party list. Several of these disqualified parties, including Rodina and the Communist Party, plan to appeal their disqualifications in court.

16. (U) The parties drew lots for their order on the ballot. The party names and top five candidates will appear in the following order:

1) "Ata-Meken" socialist party: Omurbek Tekebayev, Kubatbek Baibolov, Temir Sariyev, Tatyana Ponomaryova, and Duishenkul Chotonov;

2) "Erkindik" party: Topchubek Turgunaliyev, Moidun Namadjanov, Bubusara Orozbekova, Kamal Sooronkulov, and Noomajan Arkabayev;

3) "New Force" party of women and youth: Tokon Shailiyeva, Lyubov Safonova, Taalaibek Sagynov, Aleksey Chikayev, and Svetlana Moldogaziyeva;

4) "Turan" democratic party: Taiyrbek Sarpashev, Kanybek Imanaliyev, Okmotbek Almakuchukov, Nelya Beishenaliyeva, and Alymbek Chatkalbayev;

5) "Ar-Namys" political party: Felix Kulov, Valery Dil, Bodosh Mamyrova, Anvar Artykov, and Emil Aliyev;

6) Social Democratic Party of Kyrgyzstan: Omurbek Babanov, Bakyt Beshimov, Ruslan Shabotoyev, Irina Karamushkina, and Osmon Artykbayev;

7) "Erkin Kyrgyzstan" political party: Tursunbay Bakir uulu, Kylych Sultanov, Rashatbek Kamalov, Pazilet Tajibayeva, and Meder Usenov;

8) "Glas Naroda" (Voice of the People) political party: Bolot Maripov, Taiyrbek Borbugulov, Jenishbek Baigitiyev, Auinura Altybayeva, and Aibek Chokoshev;

9) "Aalam" party of non-partisans: Arslanbek Maliyev, Gulmira Shakirova, Sultan Maganbetov, Tanabar Sultankhodjayeva, and Gani Asanaliyev;

10) "Asaba" party of national revival: Jenishbek Nazaraliyev, Azimbek Beknazarov, Roza Nurmatova, Alevtina Pronenko, and Dooronbek Sadyrbayev;

11) "Ak Jol" People's party: Cholpon Bayekova, Adakham Madumarov, Vladimir Nifadyev, Ernst Akramov, and Elmira Ibrahimova.

12) Party of Communists of Kyrgyzstan: Iskhak Masaliyev, Nikolay Bailo, Beishen Akunov, Bulmairam Mamaseitova, and Ainash Seitzkazyev.

International Observers Arrive  
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17. (C) The Kyrgyz government invited the OSCE and other international organizations to observe the parliamentary elections. OSCE/ODIHR is deploying a standard Election Observation Mission (EOM) to assess the elections. Thirty-two long-term observers were deployed over the weekend of November 24-25 to all regions of the country, and OSCE/ODIHR hopes to field up to 250 short-term observers for

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the polling. EOM Head Nikolai Vulchanov told us that his team had received good cooperation from Kyrgyz government and election officials, but he already had a number of potential concerns about the fairness of the process, including the high thresholds, possible restrictions on statements by observers prior to the vote, and whether the CEC would use the "Shailoo" computer system to report election results by precinct. (Note: The CEC did not report results on a precinct level for the October constitutional referendum. End Note.) The Embassy is also planning to deploy up to 20 teams to observe the voting.

Comment  
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18. (C) The regional threshold will serve as a barrier to most parties, and it will give the CEC a tool with which to exclude a party that polls well across the country but may fail in one region. Even in a clean election, only a few parties -- and probably only one or two -- would cross such high thresholds. But the government may be tempted to overplay its already strong hand; we have heard that several candidates on the lower half of the Ak Jol list are pushing hard for Ak Jol to take all of the seats. As OSCE Bishkek Office Head Ambassador Mueller noted, the question is not whether the government will manipulate these elections, but whether it will manipulate wisely, allowing a multi-party parliament with a divergence of views, or whether it will manipulate foolishly, creating a one-party parliament. A one-party parliament would leave a large number of voters unrepresented in parliament, laying the grounds for future protests or instability.  
LITZENBERGER